

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 1057  
By Jackson

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of James Maxwell Cowan, Jr., former Chief Sergeant at Arms of the Senate of the Tennessee General Assembly.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of our friend James Maxwell Cowan, Jr., a former Sergeant at Arms of the Senate of the 100<sup>th</sup> – 102<sup>nd</sup> Tennessee General Assemblies, during the years of 1997 to 2002 respectively, serving as Chief Sergeant at Arms during the 102<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, James Maxwell Cowan, Jr., was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities and was the owner of the former General Contractors Bridge Builders; and

WHEREAS, a native Tennessean born in Dickson on February 29, 1920, James Maxwell Cowan, Jr., attended Dickson High School, where he played football and saxophone in the band; Valedictorian of the Class of 1938, he was the High School State Champion for Public Speaking and attended the national championship in California; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cowan was a graduate of Tennessee Military Institute, where he played football while earning an Associate Degree in Business, before being drafted into military service on January 1, 1942; and

WHEREAS, immediately named an Acting Sergeant because of his military training at Tennessee Military Institute, Jim Cowan was a member of the 5307<sup>th</sup> Composite Unit (Provisional) of the U.S. Army, the famed "Merrill's Marauders," an all-volunteer force of 3,000 troops that heroically fought and defeated the Japanese Army in the jungles of Burma; and

WHEREAS, for his outstanding military service Mr. Cowan received the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, and the Purple Heart before the end of World War II, when he returned home to

Tennessee to begin a remarkable career in the construction industry working with his father, who owned a very large construction company; and

WHEREAS, called back to active duty with the outbreak of the Korean War, the Department of the Army chose to utilize Jim Cowan's construction experience rather than his ability to carry a gun, as they called on him to construct and/or rebuild runways and barracks at Eglin Air Force Base, Kessler Air Force Base and other military installations; he also built a technically advanced wind tunnel facility for airplanes at Elgin Air Force Base; and

WHEREAS, named a Colonel on the staff of Governor Frank G. Clement, James Maxwell Cowan, Jr., became very involved in the early 1950s in the effort to ensure benefits for military veterans for their dutiful service; during the administrations of Governors Clement and Ellington, he served as a field representative for the Tennessee Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, after his tenure with state government, Mr. Cowan accepted employment with American Republic Insurance Company, quickly becoming a top supervisor and receiving special recognition each year as one of the top five salesmen for the company; and

WHEREAS, returning to state government in the 1980s, Jim Cowan once again was called upon to utilize his construction expertise, traveling and working across Tennessee to repair, restore, and remodel state park facilities; and

WHEREAS, remaining active in the military reserves and rising in the ranks during his years of military service, Colonel Jim Cowan was awarded a Brigadier General star upon retirement, having reached the mandatory retirement age of seventy in 1990; he had the great honor of carrying the American flag in England, during their yearly celebration of the end of World War II, more than any other American, and he was very proud to have personally conversed with Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Phillip; and

WHEREAS, an active member and participant in many veterans organizations, General Cowan was a sixty-year member of Sensing Brothers Post 4641 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), and a member of Lucien Berry Post 115 of the American Legion, Disabled Veterans of America, Korean War Veterans, and the Military Order of the Purple Heart; and

WHEREAS, a recognized leader among his fellow veterans, James Maxwell Cowan, Jr., served as post commander of his local chapters of the American Legion and the VFW several

times and was a former State Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, as well as the reigning State Commander of the Military Order of the Purple Heart; and

WHEREAS, a member of Tennessee City Masonic Lodge 548, F&AM, and a 32<sup>nd</sup> degree Scottish Rite Mason, Jim Cowan received numerous honors and awards from veterans organizations for his outstanding work on behalf of veterans, as well as special recognitions from both the State of Tennessee and the federal government for his tireless support of veterans and veterans organizations; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cowan was also deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; he enjoyed the loving companionship of his beloved late wife, Mary Josephine Clayborn Cowan, for 56 years and was the proud father of two devoted children, son Jimmy and his wife Wanda, and son Benny; he was also the doting grandfather of two wonderful grandsons, Shane and Alex; and

WHEREAS, James Maxwell Cowan, Jr., lived life with an honorable sense of purpose and duty to his family, his fellow man, his state, and his country; his distinguished service, both in time of war and peace, brought him very deserved recognition during his lifetime and will resound across the years to come to the benefit of generations of Tennesseans and Americans yet to be born; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant, benevolent gentleman, and dear friend; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of our beloved colleague, James Maxwell Cowan, Jr., reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character as a military veteran, businessman, public servant, and friend, and upon his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mr. Cowan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.

